

REMARKS

Claims 12-20 are pending and at issue in the application with claims 12 and 13 being the independent claims. Claims 1-11 have been cancelled. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in view of the remarks below is respectfully requested.

The outstanding objections to the drawings and the specification are respectfully traversed. The applicants respectfully submit that the forgoing amendments overcome such objections and therefore request reconsideration and withdrawal of the same.

Cancelled claims 1, 7, 8 and 11 were rejected as indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Although claims 1-11 have been cancelled, the applicants respectfully submit that claims 12-20 overcome any indefiniteness rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In particular, the “means for acquiring information from users” recited in claim 13 is part of the user interface and users are assigned to user groups based on information acquired from users. The “certain parcel compartments and groups of parcel compartments” recited in claim 19 provides antecedent basis to the “parcel compartments” recited in claim 20. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully submit that each of pending claims 12-20 is not indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Cancelled claims 1-11 were rejected as unpatentable over Porter (U.S. Pat. No. 5,774,053) in view of Kakuta (U.S. Pat. No. 6,456,900). Claims 1-11 have been cancelled. However, the applicants respectfully submit that new claims 12-20 are not obvious over Porter in view of Kakuta. For example, neither Porter nor Kakuta teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claims 12 and 13. In particular, each of claims 12-20 recites an electronic parcel compartment system or method of operating an electronic parcel compartment system where, after assignment of a user to a user group, a function can be activated that causes an essentially simultaneous opening of several parcel compartments.

Porter does not disclose or suggest an electronic parcel compartment system or method of operating an electronic parcel compartment system where a function can be activated that causes an essentially simultaneous opening of several parcel compartments after assignment of a user to a user group. Although Porter discloses a storage device (10) for delivering and picking up goods, Porter does not disclose a compartment system, as acknowledged in the official action. (See official action dated 9/20/2005, page 6). Instead,

Porter only discloses a single storage device (10), and therefore cannot disclose or suggest a function that causes essentially simultaneous opening of *several* parcel compartments after assignment of a user to a user group, as recited by claims 12-20.

Likewise, Kakuta also does not disclose or suggest an electronic parcel compartment system or method of operating an electronic parcel compartment system where a function can be activated that causes an essentially simultaneous opening of several parcel compartments after assignment of a user to a user group. Although Kakuta discloses a delivery system that includes a plurality of merchandise delivery equipment each having lockers (101) (see Kakuta, col. 6, ln. 50 to col. 7, ln. 17), Kakuta does not disclose that several of the lockers (101) may be simultaneously opened. Instead, Kakuta appears to disclose only opening lockers individually. Further, Kakuta does not disclose or suggest assigning users to a group. Accordingly, Kakuta does not disclose or suggest a function that causes essentially *simultaneous* opening of several parcel compartments after assignment of a user to a user group, as recited by claims 12-20.

The cited references therefore do not teach or suggest all of the claims limitations of independent claims 12 and 13, whether taken individually or in combination. It is clear that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be established where all the limitations of a claimed combination are not taught or suggested by the prior art. See *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). See also MPEP 2143.03.

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CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are patentable over the art of record and should be allowed. In the light of the foregoing, prompt issuance of a notice of allowance is respectfully solicited. Should the examiner have any questions, the examiner is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include new Figs. 2 and 3. In Figs. 2 and 3, examples of the previously omitted means for acquiring information from users, means for assigning the users to user groups, system control, functions of the electronic parcel compartment system, database, user input device, processor and controller has been added. Support for the requested changes may be found throughout the specification, drawings and claims as originally filed. No new matter has been added.

Attachment: New Sheets